The Press and Banner

ABBEVILLE, S. C.

Published Every Wednesday by

THE PRESS AND BANNER CO

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WEDNESDAY, DEC. 15, 1915.

FARMS AND MARKETS.

In his address delivered before the Pendleton Farmers Society, Secretary Houston calls attention to the fact that the farms of the state are growing smaller each year, the average farm now containing about seventy-six acres of land, while fifty years ago the farms contained an average of some five hundred acres.

The Secretary believes that the unit farm is too mall for the economical employment of labor, and that the country will not prosper as it should on that account. All of which shows that the Secretary is not informed as to real conditions in this section, or that he does not know what is real prosperity and progress. Fifty years ago when the farms had five hundred acres each they were in the hands of a few lordly land-owners, and the lands were tilled for him by negroes and the "tenant class." It is possible that on such large farms labor was employed more days in the year than now, and that machinery and farming implements were used more days in the year, but we doubt it.

But that is not the real question. A few men then owned the lands which sold for little because only these few were able to purchase lands. Consequently the people who did the real work were not farmers but laborers, and the lands were tended as laborers are wont to tend them.

But in these later years, every man has become, or desires to be, his own landlord. Consequently instead of the tenant class and the day laborers of the years gone by, we have a constantly increasing number of land-owners, who are willing to own small farms, to live on them, raise and educate families—real men who are a part and parcel of the country, all of which should enter into consideration when we weigh the results accruing from the employment and performance of labor.

It is not correct to say that the division of the lands into these small farms is impeding progress. Other causes, such as, marketing conditions may not be so good with the small farmer, and he may not be able to dispose of the products of the farm so well as could be done with fewer and larger farms, which might be organized, but the real progress in land development, in the prosperity and progress of the people on the farms will be found on the seventy-six acre farms; and the people who are looking for good government, for good schools, good communities and clean politics, are the men who are struggling to own the small farms. The economical employment of labor should not be measured alone by the number of days of work but by results, and these people are showing the real substantial results.

If there is any doubt in the mind of anyone on this subject, a real investigation in the counties of the Piedmont section will dispel this doubt. Those counties are thriving most which are settled by the white people of the country, who are willing to divide and subdivide the lands, so that every man may have a place he calls his own. The blighting effect of large farms has affected the Western part of Abbeville county for years. With vast areas of the most fertile lands in this part of the state, the owners have been content to farm them by negro labor, and thriftless tenants. The lands remained undesirable, and almost valueless, for years. But within the last fifteen years, these lands have passed into the hands of men who were willing to divide them and sell small farms. Many men who now own thirty acres of land in this section are today worth more in the dollars and cents their lands will bring than men were who owned three hundred acres of the same lands twenty years ago.

The country is being rapidly populated with people who want to own small farms, and in a few years we shall see many of them, with comfortable homes, good out-buildings, with school-houses and churches, a happy colony of free people, where only yesterday there was the two-room weatherboarded house, unceiled, covered with rude boards and with a mud chimney, and this should be the final measure of the economical employment of labor—either one's own or that of others.

The Secretary says truly that marketing conditions should be improved in the South. There are acres and acres of lands which may be more profitably planted in food crops than in cotton. Sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes, wheat, oats, corn, and all kinds of fruits may be grown here, but there is no market; and this may be caused, as he says, by the fact that the individual farm is too small a unit. The producers on the farms need real cooperation in finding markets for all these products. It is not that the people do not want to diversify on money crops, but the trouble is that they cannot diversify on these crops, because it takes money to educate children, build homes, build school houses, pay the preacher and have the modern conveniences of home-life, and this is why cotton is king in the south and the farmers the subjects.

If the Secretary shall be able to devise some means by which the farmers of the South may learn to cooperate and find markets for other money crops, and shall teach them to help themselves, and not look to the government and the politicians for succor, he will have done something substantial for the people. But when the market is opened for potatoes, the trouble is, that we shall have a potato candidate for every office in the county, and the same will be true with tomatoes, and peaches, and black-berries. The people of the farms want most to learn that farming is a business, and that it should be carried on in a business way. If one man can come into a community and collect the products of a single kind there and show the people how to find a market for it, the lesson will have been learned. It is not that the people will not learn, but that they need a teacher. It is here that every community needs a leader.

THE FERTILIZER SITUATION.

It appears certain that commercial fertilizers will be so high next year that farmers will be unable to plant the usual amount of cotton, even if they desire to do so. The prices this year should have taught them the lesson that a small crop of cotton is the salvation of the South from a financial standpoint. But whether they desire to further curtail or not, they must do so next year. Especially is this true with regard to farmers whose lands demand a large amount of potash in order to produce cotton.

Such being the case the farmers should begin to prepare lands for planting corn. And while it is a little late to do so, they should plant wheat and oats very largely, else many acres of land will lie idle.

But the farmers will not lose anything from the planting of corn and small grains. When the difference in labor and fertilizers is accounted for, the yield of corn per acre should pay almost as much as the yield of cotton. And there should be a ready market for corn and small grains in view of the fact that some twenty-five millions of dollars worth of these products are annually shipped into South Carolina.

In the meantime farmers may secure a certain amount of potash for themselves by raking up pine straw and oak leaves and making compost. Both the straw and leaves furnish a considerable amount of potash. A dollar saved in this way is a dollar made.

A wasted opportunity comes home to roost.

Air castles are built on a foundation of impossibilities.

Music isn't necessarily broken because it comes in pieces.

Profited by Boll Weevil

How Mississippi Mastered and Profited By Boll Weevil

(By T. Larry Gantt.)

Editor Constitution: Since the publication of my article on the cotton boll weevil in the Constitution, I have received a number of letters and postal cards from different sections of Georgia, many asking further information about the pest. Among the number was one from my old friend Jim Price. Jim says that Georgia never has been downed, and they intend to whip Mr. Weevil, even if it becomes necessary to screen their cotton fields.

In my first letter I gave your people the dark side of the picture, and I will now write about the brighter side. I believe that the boll weevil will prove a blessing in disguise to the South, and do for our farmers what Abraham Lincoln did for the negro: Emancipate them from the domination of the western grain grower and meat raiser. But for the appearance of the little critter in our fields, I believe that the South would today be raising something like 25,000,000 bales of cotton, the staple selling from three or four cents. And, furthermore, I do not think the pest will play much havoc in the upper counties of Georgia, for it is a tropical insect and does not flourish among rocks and red clay. But from, say, Hancock county southward farmers had as well make up their minds to abandon cotton as the chief money crop and plant their fields in something else, and if they do plant cotton, to reduce the acreage at least 90 per cent, for every stalk must be carefully picked each ten days for weevils; and this is a work that the darky will not do. If cotton is grown under boll weevil conditions it must be with white labor. In this county I do not believe that ten bales are raised by negroes. They will plant plow and hoe cotton, but will not do the painstaking work required to keep down the insect pest. So my advice to farmers in the infested territory is to only plant what cotton they can look after with white labor. In this county you can't hire the darky for love or money to make cotton

What Mississippi Has Done.

But I want to show your people what the farmers of this (Jones county, Mississippi) have achieved in the way of independence and prosperity, after their country has been invaded for some six years by the cotton boll weevil. In order to do this, it will be necessary for me to give a brief sketch of this county. When the war (our civil war) was started, there were only some 250 people in Jones county, and we now have over 40,000 inhabitants, fully 80 per cent whites. Every ten years the county has doubled in population, and the county continues to grow by leaps and bounds. Our county is checkered with railroads, and a trolley line will split it wide open which is now in operation for seven miles. Good dirt roads are also being built everywhere. And this is being achieved with white labor, the few negroes in our midst being in the employ of corporations, and it is rare to see one at work in the fields. Jones county is about forty miles square, its topography being about the same as Jackson, Banks and Madison. There are neither swamps nor malaria, and splendid pure freestone water can be had anywhere. At the close of the civil war the whole country was covered with an unbroken forest of yellow pine. Enterprising northerners bought up this timbered land at one or two dollars per acre and made large fortunes from the lumber. The land was considered valueless, and cut-over lands can now be bought as low as $5 per acre; but it is only a question of time when it will bring ten times that price. If the farmers here worked as long and as hard as they do among "the old red hills of Georgia," they would all be making big money. But it is so easy to live here that they do not put in more than four months' steady work. The average farm is from fifteen to thirty acres, and from these patches families make a splendid living and some money. You can grow any manner of crop here, and it is easy to make from 30 to 100 bushels of corn or oats per acre. For the two succeeding years, young boys in this county made respectively 221 and 210 bushels of corn per acre, and I saw a patch from which a negro made 30 bushels per acre and only ran around his crop one time after planting. They also grow ribbon cane syrup, making from 300 to 500 gallons per acre, sweet potatoes and anything else in the way of fruit or cereal.

Did Not Depend on Cotton.

But to return to my subject: When the European war broke out last year it had no effect whatever on the people of Jones county, but was really to their profit. Not one farmer in ten owed a dollar, and they were able to hold their few bales of cotton, which they did. You can today start out in the country and buy at almost any farm home you pass corn, oats, meat, beef cattle, or aught else in the way of provisions. Our merchants every week ship off carloads of home-raised corn oats, syrup, potatoes, pinders, and other produce. Every farmer has a large herd of cattle, and they do not have to feed them more than ninety days during the year. The whole county is covered with a thick coating of nutritious carpet grass, which is now as green as in springtime. Each corn field is planted in the velvet bean, which matures here, and cattle are turned thereon when the crop is gathered and remain in fine condition without other feed. I do not suppose there are a hundred pounds of fodder pulled in Jones county, as there are so many more easily gathered forage crops.

Our farmers do not buy anything on credit, paying cash for even their fertilizers. And all of this independent prosperity has come about since the advent of the boll weevil. Before that pest appeared the farmers of this county raised cotton to buy supplies on time and they were kept in the lowgrounds of sorrow and burdened with debt. They are now as independent as woodsawyers. In my trips out in the country I notice improvements going on everywhere. You can now buy in our market splendid fat beef at from 8 to 12 cents per pound and during the winter wagon loads of dressed hogs are seen daily on the streets. A short time since a certain beat issued bonds to build a schoolhouse, and the bonds were bought by farmers in that community.

And what the farmers of Jones county have accomplished under boll weevil conditions certainly the industrious and enterprising people of Georgia can likewise accomplish. While the farmers do not handle so much money, they will in time adjust themselves to the new and changed situation, and become more independent and well-established on the bedrock of enduring prosperity.

Plant Early Cotton.

Our farmers have stopped the work of burning old cotton stalks, for it is an endless task, and does not check the insect. The only way to grow cotton in infested sections is to start early in the season, and pick off and destroy the weevils as fast as they appear. But this means they can be kept down, and even as much as a bale or more of cotton

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